The Cleveland Museum of Art

Press Release

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CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART AND CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY ANNOUNCE JOINT APPOINTMENT

(Cleveland, OH) Henry Adams, who recently served as interim director of the Kemper Museum of Art in Kansas City, Missouri, will become the new Curator of American Painting at the Cleveland Museum of Art and Professor of American Art at Case Western Reserve University. The announcement of the joint position came today from Robert P. Bergman, Director of the Cleveland Museum of Art, and John Bassett, Dean of CWRU's College of Arts and Sciences.

A noted specialist in the field of American art, Adams is one the nation's leading experts on both Thomas Hart Benton and John La Farge. Adams' research and publications have ranged over the entire spectrum of American painting from the mid-19th to the mid-20th century. Adams is the most senior scholar to occupy this position—a post that reflects the museum-university partnership in jointly operating Northeast Ohio's only doctoral-level graduate program in art history.

Adams has spent the majority of his career in two museum posts: first as Curator of Fine Arts at the Museum of Art at the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh from 1982 to 1984 and then as the Samuel Sosland Curator of American Art at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City from 1984 to 1993. Concurrent with these positions, he taught at the University of Pittsburgh and at the University of Kansas.

He also served as the director of the Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens in Jacksonville, Florida, from 1994 to 1995 and came to the Kemper Museum of Art in Kansas City in 1996.

"I have known and admired Henry Adams and his work over the years and have marveled at the range and quality of his accomplishments. He has curated any number of important exhibitions, made stellar acquisitions, and is among the most prolific museum-based scholars in the country. This well-known and well-respected senior museum professional will add mightily to the strength of our curatorial ranks," said Bergman.

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Jenifer Neils, the Ruth Coulter Heede Professor and chair of CWRU's Department of Art History and Art, concurred: "Dr. Adams appointment will not only give the department a senior Americanist of the first rank, but will also provide a new dimension of leadership to the CMA/CWRU joint program in art history and museum studies." Adams, whose appointment will be effective August 18, will be the first full professor to hold the joint CMA/CWRU appointment.

Adams is the only museum curator to receive the prestigious Arthur Kingsley Porter Prize of the College Art Association, bestowed annually for the best article published by a young scholar in the *Art Bulletin*, America's leading scholarly journal in the history of art.

The new professor and curator earned his B.A. from Harvard University and his M.A. and Ph.D. from Yale University. In 1980, Yale University awarded Adams the Frances Blanshard prize for the best doctoral dissertation in art history for his "John La Farge, 1835-1910: From Amateur to Artist."

The number and range of Adams' publications is extensive. He has written or co-authored nine books or book-length catalogues on La Farge, Benton, and Boardman Robinson and catalogues of the American holdings of the Carnegie and the Nelson-Atkins museums. Among his other scholarly works are articles on William Morris Hunt, Thomas Cole, George Bellows, Fairfield Porter, Winslow Homer, Rockwell Kent, George Caleb Bingham, and many other artists. His exhibitions on La Farge and Benton toured the country and are considered landmarks in the field.

"Sometimes the stars are aligned just perfectly. If I could have designed the perfect position for myself, it would have been one that combined teaching and writing with curatorial responsibility," said Adams about his impending arrival at the museum and university. "What good fortune to wind up at one of America's great museums and on the faculty of this unique joint program. I am looking forward to settling in and to contributing whatever I can to the whole range of activities at the university and the museum."

Adams currently lives in Kansas City with his wife, Marianne Berardi, an art historian specializing in 17th-century Dutch art.

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